Ajmer-Udaipur on Ahmedabad route on National Highway No.8 daily more than the load bearing capacity of this highway.

(b) if so, the number and ratio of these vehicles; and

(c) the measures being taken by the Government to remove this discrepancy ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) The section of National Highway No.8 in question is carrying about 10,000 to 35,000 Passenger-Car-Units (PCUs) against the capacity norms of 15,000 PCUs per day for two laned road.

(c) The construction/development of National Highways is a continuous process. Out of 972 km length of the Delhi-Ahmedabad segment of N.H. 8, four laning of 141 km has already been completed and that for another 126 km is in various stages of completed and that for another 126 km is in various stages of progress. However, for widening the remaining length to four lane carriageway under BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) basis, feasibility study has been initiated by the National Highways Authority of India working under the administrative control of the Ministry.

*[English]*

**Joint Venture with Foreign Firms**

2894. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Hindustan Shipyard has explored the possibility of Joint Venture proposals with foreign companies;

(b) whether an agreement with the Norwegian Company has been finalised;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the State owned Hindustan Shipyard has accumulated losses to the order of Rs. 994 crores at present; and

(e) the time by which the offers of the foreign firms for reviving the Hindustan Shipyard are likely to be considered ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Accumulated loss as per audited figures available for 1995-96 is Rs. 845.583 crores. The Government has recently restructured the capital base of the company by writing off of Govt. loans and interest thereon to the extent of Rs. 470.93 crores and conversion into equity to the tune of Rs. 120.20 crores.

(e) Action has since been initiated to examine the offer of Norwegian firm for Joint Venture.

**Ravva Oil Field**

2895. SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the gas produced at Raava oilfield in the Krishna-Godavari basin would be piped to down stream consumers;

(b) whether an agreement was signed between the Gas Authority of India, Raava Joint Venture and Vedeocon Petroleum with the Union Government in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which it is likely to benefit to the consumers in the State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) to (c) A gas sale contract has been signed on the 27th June, 1997 between Gas Authority of India Limited, nominee of Govt. of India and Ravva joint venture of Videocon Petroleum Ltd., Command Petroleum India and Ravva Oil (Singapore). About 0.7 MMSCMD of gas shall be supplied under this contract to meet the requirement of downstream consumers including power and fertilizer plants in Andhra Pradesh.

**Conservation of Endangered Species**

2896. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a research centre for the conservation of the endangered species, is being set up at Hyderabad in collaboration with Central Zoo Authority of India;

(b) if so, whether India would be the third country which will have such a centre;

(c) the total amount involved in setting up this centre; and